Disinvestment targets

*297. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the disinvestment targets of Government for the next two years;

(b) whether Government are considering to offload equity of blue-chip PSUs like NTPC, Power Grid Corporation, Public Sector Banks through Initial Public offerings during the next two years; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Government has decided, in principle, to list large, profitable Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) on domestic stock exchanges and to selectively sell a minority stake in listed, profitable PSEs while retaining atleast 51% of the shares alongwith full management control so as not to alter the Public Sector character of the companies. No decision has, however, been taken so far for disinvestment of any specific Public Sector Enterprise. The disinvestment programme over the next two years will be designed to take into account the capital requirements of the PSEs market conditions and all other relevant considerations. All decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis to optimize the Government's realisation from disinvestment.

In the case of Public Sector Banks, decisions regarding raising of equity through Public Issue are taken by their respective Boards. The Banking Companies (Transfer and Acquisition of Undertakings) Act, 1970 does not allow disinvestment of Government equity in nationalised Banks, though Return of Equity is permissible, but it has to be ensured that Government equity does not come down below 51%.

Promotion of tourism in Assam

*298. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the tourism industry of Assam being in a poor state;

(b) the policy of the Ministry to realise the potentials of the State in the fields of eco-tourism and other sectors upto fullest extent; and

(c) the provision made in the Budget 2005-06, if any, to boost the tourism industry of Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Development of tourist places including creation of infrastructure facilities to attract tourists including foreign tourists is primarily undertaken by the Private Sector, State Governments and Union Territories. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India however, undertake development of Integrated Tourism, Circuits, Product/ Infrastructure, Destination Development including Rural Tourism Projects etc. in collaboration with the State Governments including the State of Assam.

(b) During the Tenth Plan Period, funds released to the State of Assam for tourism related projects including Destination Development, eco-tourism, rural tourism and tourism circuits are as under:—

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Amount Released
2002-2003	768.13
2003-2004	313.46
2004-2005	1025.30

Besides, Ministry of Tourism has initiated an integrated communication strategy involving marketing, advertising and publicity support for giving proper exposure to the tourist attractions of the North Eastern States including Assam.

(c) Budget outlay approved for Tourism is not allotted to the States including North-East on State-wise basis. However, 10 per cent of total allocation is provided as lump sum provision for the North East States including Assam. An amount of Rs. 79 crores has been allocated as lump

sum provision for North East in BE 2005-2006. Funds are sanctioned on the basis of receipt of project proposals identified in consultation with the State Government.

Implementation of river-linking projects in Madhya Pradesh

†*299. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an important scheme related to linking of rivers of the country is under consideration of the Government;

(b) whether in the first phase a proposal of two projects is under consideration for Madhya Pradesh;

(c) whether the State Government of Madhya Pradesh has conveyed its consent to the Central Government for implementation of both the projects; and

(d) by when the work on both these projects is proposed to be commenced?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Water Resources (MOWR) (erstwhile Ministry of Irrigation) and Central Water Commission (CWC) formulated a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for Water Resources Development in 1980 envisaging interbasin transfer of water from surplus basins to deficit basins/areas which comprises of two components namely Himalayan Rivers Development Component and Peninsular Rivers Development Component. National Water Development Agency (NWDA) was set up under the MOWR in 1982 for carrying out various technical studies to establish the feasibility of the proposals of NPP and to give concrete shape to it. Based on various studies conducted, NWDA has identified 30 links for preparing Feasibility Reports(FRs). NWDA has completed feasibility reports for 14 links under Peninsular Rivers Development Component and two links under Himalayan Rivers Development Component. Two link porposal v/z.Ken-Betwa concerning MP & UP and Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal concerning MP and Rajasthan

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.